

REMARKS

Entry of the foregoing amendment is respectfully requested.

Summary of Telephonic Interview with the Examiner

Applicants note that the Examiner Interview Summary, PTOL-413B, attached to the Office Action contains a complete record of the interview.

Summary of Amendments

Upon entry of the present amendment, claim 33 is amended, whereby claim 33 will be pending, with claim 33 being an independent claim.

Amended claim 33 generally corresponds to cancelled claim 21, which is rewritten in independent form.

Summary of Office Action

Applicants express appreciation to the Examiner for the allowance of claims 16, 18-20 and 23-32.

Claim 33 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Semel (U.S. Patent No. 6,068,813; hereinafter "SEMEL").

Response to Office Action

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the present rejection is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendment and the following remarks.

Claim 33 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over SEMEL. The Office Action takes the position that the iron-

based powder material comprising a chrome molybdenum steel powder is rendered obvious by SEMEL. The Office Action concedes that SEMEL does not specifically teach this feature but alleges that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to select chromium from the broader range of pre-alloying elements disclosed by SEMEL to be included in the iron-molybdenum pre-alloy powder as SEMEL allegedly teaches that any of the pre-alloying elements listed in col. 7, lines 43-54 of SEMEL, including chromium, can be included in the iron-molybdenum base alloy to be used in powder metallurgy.

Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested. Specifically, SEMEL fails to teach or suggest all of the aspects of claim 33 as amended. Furthermore, the composition of amended claim 33 provides unexpected advantages, as reflected in Applicants' specification, which teaches that the chrome molybdenum powder, when mainly composed of aspherical particles, leads to a more effective scattering of graphite powder on the surface of the chrome molybdenum particles when compared to scattering of graphite powder on chrome molybdenum spherical particles (see Applicant specification at page 16, third paragraph). Applicants respectfully submit that SEMEL is silent with respect to a specific shape of the disclosed chrome-molybdenum steel powders. More specifically, SEMEL is silent with respect to disclosing chrome molybdenum steel powders that are mainly composed of aspherical particles for the purpose of obtaining a more effective scattering of graphite particles on the surface thereof. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that there is no motivation in SEMEL for the use of

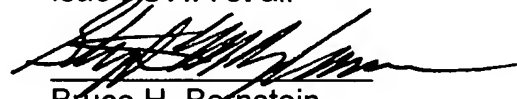
chrome molybdenum steel powders mainly composed of aspherical particles, as disclosed in the present invention.

Applicants note the amendment to claim 33 does not constitute new matter. For support of presently amended claim 33, Applicant respectfully directs the Examiner's attention to page 16, third paragraph, of the present application.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is believed that all of the claims in this application are in condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested. If any issues yet remain which can be resolved by a telephone conference, the Examiner is respectfully invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number below.

Respectfully submitted,
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